

OMNI CHRISTMAS/LOVE AND PEACEMAKING DAY NEWSLETTER, DECEMBER 25, 2013. Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace and Justice.

OMNI National/International *DAYS* Project

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<http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/>

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Index:

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[OMNI: I saw this at the Walton Arts Center in Fayetteville.—Dick]

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Cantus & Theater Latte Da: "All is Calm"

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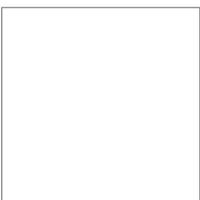
The Western Front, Christmas Eve, 1914. Out of the violence of the Great War's trenches comes a silence, then a song as a young German soldier steps into no man's land singing Stille Nacht. Thus begins an extraordinary night of camaraderie, music, and peace.

Cantus and Theater Latté Da present *All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914* by Peter Rothstein, with musical arrangements by Erick Lichte and Timothy C. Takach. Through new arrangements of European carols and war-songs for a capella voices, All Is Calm recalls the remarkable World War I truce between Allied Forces and German soldiers in no man's land on Christmas, 1914.

MORE...

Posted: May-23-2008

Latest Recording



All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914

The Western Front, Christmas, 1914. Out of the violence comes a silence, then a song. A young German soldier steps into No Man's Land singing Stille Nacht (Silent Night). Thus begins an extraordinary night of camaraderie, music, peace. Re-live this remarkable true story from WWI through the words and songs of the men who lived it. The original cast recording from the highly acclaimed collaboration between Cantus and Theater Latté Da is now available. Enjoy Peter Rothstein's radio...

MORE...

Posted: Nov-20-2008

Latest Acclaim

"The program—a collaboration between Theater Latté Da, Hennepin Theatre Trust, and the male ensemble Cantus, who provide the stunning and almost ceaseless vocals—is not quite a play, but more like a vocal retelling of history.

"Because of the show's sheer beauty we are left with this imperfect, but not all together unsatisfactory, answer to the soldier's question. The story of the Christmas truce teaches us that at our best we are capable of laying down our guns and lifting our voices as one."

— Twin Cities Daily Planet

MORE...

PBS SILENT NIGHT, Dec. 13, 2013

Silent Night [I saw the PBS premiere Dec. 13, 2013. –Dick]

Silent Night premiered Friday, December 13, 2013.

[Silent Night](#)

Watch the full episode above

About the Program

The Minnesota Opera's production of Kevin Puts' *Silent Night*, a company commission which earned its composer the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Music, recounts a miraculous moment of peace during one of the bloodiest wars in human history.

tesy of *Silent Night*, 2011 © Michal Daniel for Minnesota Opera

The fascinating true story takes place on World War I's western front. Weapons are laid down when the Scottish, French and German officers defy their superiors and negotiate a Christmas Eve truce. Enemies become brothers as they come together to share Christmas and bury their dead.

The Minnesota Opera presented the world premiere of *Silent Night* in November, 2011 at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in Saint Paul, Minnesota. It was composed by Kevin Puts with libretto by Mark Campbell, based on the screenplay for *Joyeux Noël* by Christian Carion for the motion picture produced by Nord-Ouest Production. The opera recounts a miraculous moment of peace during one of the bloodiest wars in human history. On WWI's western front, Scottish, French and German officers defy their superiors and negotiate a Christmas Eve truce. Enemies become brothers as they share Christmas and bury their dead. William Burden starred as the soldier whose voice inspired peace – if only for a day.

Silent Night was conducted by Minnesota Opera's Music Director Michael Christie and staged by Academy Award-winning director Eric Simonson. *Silent Night*, which was recently honored with a regional Emmy nomination, was the first commission of Minnesota Opera's New Works Initiative, a landmark program designed to invigorate the operatic repertoire with an infusion of contemporary works.

[Minnesota Opera](#)'s production of Kevin Puts' *Silent Night* is presented by [tpt National Productions](#).

Joyeux Noel (2005)

[I saw this several years ago at an OMNI Film Night. -D]

116 min - [Drama](#) | [History](#) | [Music](#) - [9 November 2005 \(France\)](#)

Reviews: [139 user](#) | [108 critic](#) | [26](#) from [Metacritic.com](#)

On Christmas Eve during world War I, the Germans, French, and Scottish fraternize and get to know the men who live on the opposite side of a brutal war, in what became a true lesson of humanity.

Director:

[Christian Carion](#)

Writer:

[Christian Carion](#)

Stars:

[Diane Kruger](#), [Benno Fürmann](#), [Guillaume Canet](#) | [See full cast and crew »](#)



Joyeux Noel: Merry Christmas

By Austin Whitehead

"It is thought possible that the enemy may be contemplating an attack during Xmas or New Year.

Special vigilance will be maintained during this period". From General Headquarters at St. Omer- to all units 24th December, 1914" (Xmas Truce).

Joyeux Noel, (Merry Christmas) is a movie based on the Christmas Eve truce of 1914 during World War 1. *Joyeux Noel* is a movie that conveys the underlying themes of love, war, and brotherhood. The Christmas truce that the movie portrays was unorthodox in that it was not the generals or the governments who called the truce, but the ordinary soldiers on the frontlines in the trenches. The film is dedicated to the soldiers who crossed into no man's land that day.

Joyeux Noel, released in 2005, was written and directed by Christian Carion, the director of the movie, *Girl from Paris*. Carion wrote and directed the film from the three different viewpoints of the three countries involved in the Christmas truce. Carion cast the movie so that each character in the movie was portrayed by an actor who was native to the same country. The members of the cast spoke the language of their home countries. This makes the language of the film trilingual as it is in German, English, and French with subtitles in English.

The cast of *Joyeux Noel* is not well known in Hollywood, although many of the actors have been in Hollywood productions. The starring actors for the German side of the movie are Diane Kruger as Anna Sorenson, a Danish soprano working for the Berlin Opera in Germany. Diane Kruger has also acted in *Troy* and *National Treasure*. Opposite to Kruger is Benno Furmann as Nikolaus Sprink, a German Tenor who is in love with Anna and Daniel Bruhl as Horstmayer a young German Lieutenant who is in command of the German forces that participated in the truce. The starring actors for the British side of the movie are the Scottish contingent: Gary Lewis as Palmer, a priest who celebrates mass on Christmas Eve. Lewis has also acted in *Gangs of New York*, and *Eragon*. Alongside Lewis, is Steven Robertson as Jonathan, a young man who works with Palmer in a small church and who joins the British army with his brother. Robertson also acted in *Kingdom of Heaven*. Also representing the Scottish side is Alex Ferns as Gordon, a career officer who is in charge of the Scottish forces involved in the truce. The actors for the French side of the movie are Guillaume Canet as Aubybert, a young French lieutenant who is in command of the French forces that celebrate the truce. Acting beside Canet is Dany Boon as Ponchel, a French barber who joins the army after war is declared and becomes Aubybert's aide.

In 2006, *Joyeux Noel* was an Oscar nomination for best foreign film at the Academy Awards and Golden Globe awards in the United States. It was also nominated at the British Academy of Film and Television Art for Best Film not in the English Language. *Joyeux Noel* also won the Audience Award at the Leeds International Film Festival (IMDB).

The costumes of *Joyeux Noel* accurately reflect what was worn during that time. The uniforms were unique to the countries that were being portrayed. Even the use of hats instead of helmets by the Scottish and French troops was common at this time. The weapons were all stylized after the weapons used during World War 1. The movie *Joyeux Noel* follows the three nations that are thrust into combat against one another on the Western Front in 1914, the British, the French, and the Germans. The movie begins with a young child from each country reciting a speech to a class about the oppressors who stood in the way of their respective countries.

The movie then follows several key characters in the movie. The first characters that it follows are Palmer, a priest, and Jonathan, a young man who works with Palmer in a small church in Scotland. Upon the outbreak of war Jonathan and his brother join the British Army, and Palmer joins as a stretcher bearer. The film then goes to Germany where the film introduces Anna Sorenson, a

Danish soprano and Nikolaus Sprink, a German tenor. They both perform in the Berlin Opera; it is during one of their operas that the call to war in Germany is made.

The movie then moves forward two months into the war when Aubybert, a French lieutenant, is preparing his men for an assault against the German trench system. The French supported by the Scottish under the command of Gordon attack the German trenches with staggering losses to both sides. In the retreat Jonathan's brother is killed. In command of the German defenders is Horstmayer a young German lieutenant who is in command of the regiment that Sprink is in.

This is the only major battle or fight in the film. Things become calm as Christmas Day is approaching. Both sides anticipate an attack; although they don't know it, each side is in fact planning a Christmas celebration or party in the trenches. The German commander in charge of the front sent about 100,000 small Christmas trees to the frontlines. It is during the preparations for Christmas that Anna Sorenson offers to put on a Christmas Eve recital with Sprink at the German command post. After receiving permission from the German Crown Prince, Sprink is brought from the lines to participate in the recital with Anna. After the recital Sprink makes the decision to return to the front and sing for his comrades.

On the other side of the lines the French and Scottish soldiers are having Christmas dinner. Palmer begins to play the bagpipes as the rest of the Scottish soldiers begin to sing. After a few songs Sprink arrives at the German trenches and begins to sing for his comrades. After Sprink has sung first verse of Silent Night, Palmer begins playing the second verse from across the lines. Sprink rises from the trenches and sings across the field. After the song, the British applaud Sprink. Palmer then starts the opening of another song and Sprink joins in. Sprink takes one of the small Christmas trees and walks singing into no man's land between the two lines. After the song, greetings are exchanged.

At this time Horstmayer, and Gordon meet, along with Aubybert and discuss a truce for Christmas Eve. The troops from both sides converge on the field with Champagne, chocolate and other edibles and drinks. The troops mingle and show pictures of wives and sweethearts back home. It is at this time that church bells are heard in the background. A podium is quickly set up and Palmer begins a Christmas mass in no man's land. The mass ends with Anna singing Ave Maria. The three sides split apart and return to their respective lines.

On Christmas Day Jonathan tries to bury his brother as the field is covered in fog. As the fog lifts Gordon, Horstmayer, and Aubybert discuss another truce in order to bury the dead. A small cemetery is made as each side collects their fallen comrades and Palmer goes and performs a small service for each of the fallen. After the funerals, a soccer game develops between the two sides. It is at this time that Anna persuades Sprink to surrender to the French so they could remain together. Shortly after the sides once again split up and return to their posts.

Later during the day Horstmayer warns the French and the British that his artillery will open fire on their trenches. He invites them to come over and take shelter in the German trench. After the bombardment Gordon invites the Germans to take shelter in his trench because of a retaliatory bombardment from the British. After the second bombardment the Germans return to their trenches and the Scottish troops salute them with a song from their bagpipers. It is during this lull that Sprink surrenders to Aubybert.

It is not long after this that the high commands from all three countries learn of the truce. They

find out about the truce through the letters sent home by the soldiers. The commanders disagree with the truce and take actions to reprimand the troops involved. The Scottish commander comes to the front line and orders them to shoot a German soldier who is running toward the French line. Jonathan is the only one who fires and kills the soldier. The soldier running toward the French is in fact Ponchel, Aubybert's aide. The Scottish commander replaces Gordon's unit on the line. Aubybert's unit is ordered to the Verdun sector of the War where the fighting is very brutal. Horstmayer's unit is sent to the Eastern Front; the journey would take them across Germany but they are not allowed to see their families due to their fraternization with the enemy. The movie ends as the train with the German troops departs towards Russia, and the German troops sing the song the Scottish taught them during the truce.

In an article for the New York Times, movie critic Stephen Holden says that, *Joyeux Noel*, a glossy French antiwar movie is the kind of feel-good, feel-sad movie with a message that invites you to bask in the glow of communal bonhomie". Holden continues to say that,

If the film's sentiments about the madness of war are impeccable high minded, why then does *Joyeux Noel*, an Oscar nominee for best foreign-language film, feel as squishy and vague as a handsome greeting card declaring peace on earth? Maybe it's because the kinds of wars being fought in the 21st century involve religious, ideological and economic differences that go much deeper and feel more resistant to resolution than the European territorial disputes and power struggles that precipitated World War I (Holden).

Although I respect Holden's critique of *Joyeux Noel*, I strongly disagree with his analysis of the movie. True the wars fought in the 21st century are more complex; at the beginning of World War I, the traditional military tactics developing from the Napoleonic era were used. World War I was the training ground for military tactics that are still being used in the modern military. To say that religious, ideological and economic differences between opposing foes are more complex is an interesting statement. However, the beginning and ending of the film justify the theme that problems facing modern nations on the brink of, or in the throes a war have been around for centuries. With respect, I disagree with most of the points Holden made.

Although much of the story of *Joyeux Noel* is fictional, the events portrayed in the film actually happened. Although there are very few remaining survivors of World War I who fought on the western front there are quite a few written records of the events. On November 7th 2006 a young private's letter to his mother in which he talks of shaking hands and playing a game of football (soccer) with the Germans was sold at an auction (*The NY Times*). Other written accounts of the football game recorded the Germans winning with a score of 3-2 (Allen).

Letters and news of the Christmas truce of 1914 were published in Britain but the truce was covered up in France. *Joyeux Noel* portrayed the attitude of senior commanders of the different armies at the time disapproving of the truce. Senior officers from the different armies looked down upon the Christmas truce of 1914, and many of the participants along with millions of others lost their lives during the course of the war.

Although the Christmas truce of 1914 was largely dismissed and looked down upon, the countries of today look back and see that the truce was not treason or disobedience; it is now seen as a miraculous occasion. Items received as gifts during the truce and letters from the time are being

placed in museums for the remembrance of this spectacular occasion. One example is a pipe.

A pipe given to a British sergeant by a German soldier during the Christmas 1914 truce of the First World War is to be put on permanent display at National War Museum of Scotland. The pipe was one of the few artifacts to survive from the legendary Christmas Day when German and British troops left the trenches to play football and sing Christmas carols together. A German non-commissioned officer gave the pipe to a sergeant of the Second Battalion Scots Guards. The pipe was donated to the regimental collection by W.H. Abbot the regimental's chaplain (*BBC News UK*).

Although the Christmas truce of 1914 happened 94 years ago, the spirit of the truce lives on in the artifacts from the soldiers who experienced the truce, the books and movies made over this very human occasion where soldiers from opposing sides laid down their arms and greeted one another in brotherhood on the holiest of days. The Christmas truce of 1914 shows that differences between nations can be settled by common men, who can join together even in the most trying times. The Christmas truce of 1914 proves that the old lie "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori", How sweet it is to die for one's country (Owen), is false. *Joyeux Noel* portrays this message by telling the story of men whose names have been forgotten while their actions on the glorious day live on.

Works Cited

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<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/uk/scotland/577631.stm>
4. Holden, Stephen. Joyeux Noel (Merry Christmas): A Truce Forged by Germans, French and Scots. New York Times 3 March, 2006
5. Owen, Wilfred. "Dulce Et Decorum Est". <http://www.english.emory.edu/LostPoets/Dulce.html>
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Christmas 1914 & 1968

**It was fifty years and four more ago
Since World War I was being fought in the snow**

**Christmas 1914 the soldiers endured
In the darkness, no mans land was obscured**

**But then a holiday tree could be seen in the wire
In the hearts of the soldiers, dreams of peace were inspired**

**The soldiers from Germany, France, and the UK
Played soccer together on Christmas day**

**The truce was not sanctioned, they were breaking the rules
To keep fighting on Christmas, they'd have to be fools**

**The truce held in some places till New Years Day
But higher up officers made them again square away**

**Now it is Christmas 1968
Up all night, for the Sun we await**

**Our lights are all gone so our visions impaired
It's so dark at night, except for the parachute flares**

**Our mortars are thumping, the tracers are flying
My heart double pumping, there's somebody dying**

Bullets reach a target, may not be what you think

Its war for Christmas, we went over the brink

**A hundred yards past the airstrip that night
The Viet Cong were trying, to get in close for a fight**

**Back in the world, Silent Night they were singing
When our mortars took out, the gifts they were bringing**

**Then came the sound of secondary explosions
I just put it away, and forgot those emotions**

**But now its all finished with, over and done
In spite of the dying, no peace has been won**

**World War I happened a long time ago
The reasons for fighting I never did know**

**In 2014 it will be 100 years
Since the war that was stopped by those brave mutineers**

**Is peace on Earth just some words in a speech?
Or could it be something war veterans might teach?**

**Jim Hale
June 18 2011**

CHRISTMAS FOR REFUGEES

Dick Bennett

MATTHEW 2 tells the “Christmas Story” of Jesus’ birth and the wise men from the East coming to Jerusalem in search of the “king of the Jews.” King Herod, then King of the Jews, sent the men to find Jesus, which they did but returned to their own country fearing treachery. An angel alerted Joseph and Mary of the danger from King Herod, and ordered them to “flee to Egypt,” to avoid the murder of baby Jesus. And so Joseph, Mary, and Jesus became political refugees, and found sanctuary in Egypt. The danger was real, for Herod was a mass murderer. When he heard that Jesus had escaped his grasp, Herod “sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under.” After King Herod died, an angel again appeared to Joseph and advised him it was safe to return to Israel. But Joseph feared the new king of Judea, Archelaus, son of Herod, and another angel advised Joseph to go instead to Galilee, and Joseph then settled in Nazareth.

The question has surely occurred to many Christians, in pondering the problem of illegal immigrants in the US: In the life of Jesus, what ought to guide us? The most immediate thoughts would probably be the two Great Commandments, to love God and your neighbor, and the Good Samaritan story. Charity toward all people is surely the central ethical precept one gains from the life and teaching of Jesus. And so our support for refugees seems clear from the Christmas Story. Joseph and Mary with Jesus fled from a murderous ruler, and were rescued twice by people willing to give them hospitality and protection—in Egypt and Judea.

During the 1980s in South America and in Central America—in El Salvador and Guatemala especially-- , when military rulers were oppressing and killing their people, thousands fled in all directions to escape the slaughter, many of them reaching the US. Unfortunately, the fanatically anti-communist US government at the time supported anti-communist dictators all over Latin America and tried to prevent refugees from entering the US. A “Sanctuary Movement” in churches along the border and a new “underground railroad” sprung up, and many sanctuary activists were prosecuted.

What did the public majority think at the time? What think today? Should the US have replayed Joseph, Mary, and Jesus in Egypt and Judea? Should they now? Certainly General Rios Montt, General Pinochet, the El Salvadoran officers, the Argentine generals, the Contras in Nicaragua and others were Herods in varying degrees. And the US has laws permitting political refugees. The trouble is that the laws are extremely restrictive, allowing few to enter under that category, and in practice allowing fewer than the law allows. Expansion of these laws to allow more refugees should be and is a goal of Christians and of the justice movement connecting all faiths.

But another kind of refugee is at the center of a stormy controversy today. The war against economic refugees—the displaced and homeless--is roiling our country.

And yet other refugees, that promise to be far larger in number than the others—I refer to climate refugees, people fleeing the rising seas and droughts resulting from atmospheric warming—are already on the move. Economic and climate displacement together will challenge the governments of the world to an extent never before experienced. A Sanctuary Movement much greater than that of the 1980s will likely be necessary to assist the desperate populations, unless governments on all levels are prepared. Let us hope our leaders will be ready to put in practice the rescue of refugees

as were the authorities with Joseph, Mary, and Jesus.

[Reader Supported News](#)

Carl Gibson, Billions for the Pentagon, Spare Change for the Unemployed

Carl Gibson, Reader Supported News, 12 December 2013

Gibson writes: "Good jobs are on everyone's wish list this Christmas, but all the working class (because let's be honest - there's basically no middle class in this country) is getting from the beltway elite and the two corporate-owned parties is more coal in our stockings."

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FROM SOJOURNERS 11-29-12

Starting the 'Christmas Tithe'

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Religion is far too judgmental. Surveys show that many people think that, especially a new generation of young people who — more than ever before — are checking the “none of the above” religious affiliation box.

I get it. But religious leaders tend to be judgmental about many of the wrong things; they are not making moral judgments on the important questions. So I am going to be judgmental, as a religious leader, about something I just read.

A recent [Harris International and World Vision poll](#) showed that Americans plan to spend more this Christmas season on consumer gifts than they did last year, but give less to charities and ministries that help the poor. Many say they are less likely to give a charitable gift as a holiday present — a drop from 51 percent to 45 percent.

So we will have more Christmas presents this year, but less help for the poor. While retailers, economists, and politicians may rejoice at the news about higher consumer spending this year, the lower levels of support for the ones Jesus called “the least of these” should legitimately bring some moral judgments from the faith community.

Indeed, the Matthew 25 scripture that this text is taken from is one of the few, and most, judgmental passages in all the New Testament. **About some things, Jesus was judgmental. The Gospel clearly says that how we treat the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner is how we treat Jesus.** That’s pretty judgmental, especially when you go on to

read what will happen to those who ignore Jesus in this way.

But rather than *just* being judgmental, let's do something about it. Let's start a "Christmas Tithe." Let's spread the idea to our kids, our families, our friends and neighbors, and to the members of our congregations. Let's keep it simple: Keep track of all our holiday spending for gifts this year, and then tithe a percentage of that amount to an organization that directly serves the poor. A tithe is traditionally 10 percent, but you could decide to do less or even more. But make a decision about your Christmas tithe and pledge it to groups that are now struggling to respond to the highest number of Americans in poverty in half a century, and to those who focus on the poorest and most vulnerable around the world. This is a time to give *more* — not *less*.

Sit down with your kids and get them involved in the discussion and decision. You may be surprised at how responsive they are to doing this together. World Vision, which commissioned the sad survey, has a great World Vision Gift Catalog that concretely improves the lives of a children and families in need around the world by providing critical tools, opportunities, and animals to overcome extreme poverty!

We do this every Christmas Day at our home after we have opened our presents to each other; and our two boys often feel it is the best part of the day. Each kid gets to choose a gift for a family in one of the world's poorest countries. (Goats are top choices!) And then we decide together what else we will give to other families. Many other organizations provide similar opportunities. We at Sojourners have launched our own [Just Giving Guide](#) for that reason. Such gifts can be given in the name of our children or loved ones.

The only silver lining from the World Vision survey was the high number of people who like charitable gifts like this that are given in their names. This Christmas, my own extended Wallis family, instead of just giving more things to each other, are all giving to an orphanage in Haiti that our sister Marcie and her family and church are very involved with.

All of that can be part of our Christmas Tithe.

Many of us are deeply involved in missions and campaigns to bring social justice to this world — to transform structures and policies that hurt the poor into new practices that help them overcome their poverty. But the kind of personal giving that we do is also very important, especially in teaching the lessons of compassion and justice to our children.

So let's counter the results of the survey with a Christmas Tithe. Gather your family together around this, send the idea to your friends and fellow believers, take the idea to church, write letters to the editor in your local paper. Let's all decide this Christmas to tithe a percentage of all that we give in Christmas presents directly to the poor — those who were given the greatest gift at the first Christmas, with a child born in a stable who promised to bring them "good news."

Jim Wallis is the author of *Rediscovering Values: A Guide for Economic and Moral Recovery*, and CEO of *Sojourners*. His forthcoming book, *On God's Side: What Religion Forgets and Politics Hasn't Learned about Serving the Common Good*, is set to release in early 2013. Follow Jim on Twitter [@JimWallis](#).

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Been There, Bordered That. So Why Are We Still So Afraid?

by Maryada Vallet

Friends and fellow Christians, let's take this opportunity for **changing the immigration system** to be just that, real change that keeps families together, respects workers, frees the captives and welcomes immigrants, and not another excuse to perpetuate this cycle of fear of our neighbor.

+ [Click to continue](#)

COMMERCIALISM AND MATERIALISM

1. Google Search for [Center for a New American Dream](#), Dec. 20, 2013.

www.newdream.org/

National non-profit organization challenging the "more is better" definition of the **American dream**.

[Junk Mail](#)

Center for a New American Dream - more of what matters.

[Mission](#)

The mission of the Center for the New American Dream.

[Jobs](#)

Careers at the Center for the New American Dream.

[Kids and Commercialism](#)

Campaign to teach more about the effects of advertising and ...

[About Us](#)

About Us. beach sunset with silhouette Since its founding in ...

[The High Price of Materialism](#)

VIDEO: The High Price of Materialism. In this short ...

[More results from newdream.org »](#)

2. [Center for a New American Dream - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Center_for_a_New_American_Dream

The **Center for a New American Dream** is a nonprofit organization with a stated mission to "help Americans to reduce and shift their consumption to improve ...

3. [The New American Dream: It's Not What You Think - ABC News - Go ...abcnews.go.com › Money by Adam Levin - in 57 Google+ circles](#)

Sep 8, 2013 - A great number of **Americans** are redefining the **American Dream**. That was the takeaway from a recent Credit.com poll, which showed that ...

4. [Xavier University - Center for the Study of the American Dream www.xavier.edu/americandream/](#)

index **new**. ... **American Dream** Composite Index™ and Eye-Opener Results ... Happy Holidays from the **Center** for the Study of the **American Dream**.

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MIKE MASTERSON TALK ON COMMERCIALIZING CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 1, 2006 at UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY, 902 W. Maple, Fayetteville, corner of Maple and Storer, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 7PM

SPONSORED BY THE OMNI PEACE CENTER

Mr. Masterson was the Editor of the Northwest Arkansas Times and is now a columnist with the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

Comment by Mike Masterson as recorded by Dick:

Our society in particular has confused the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ with an opportunity to sell the notion of Santa Claus, Scrooge, Daisy air rifles and now a movie about Jack Frost's envy of Santa Claus. As all this rampant commercialism in the name of Christ has transpired over the past 60 years or so, others now are moving to remove the Christmas holiday altogether and, I suppose, turn it into an even crasser commercial celebration - a cause to celebrate what? Gluttony and buying gifts on credit we can't really afford to impress many we may not even like all that much? I feel true Christians are not perplexed in their faith, but we all know that many who attend church do so for reasons other than their authentic faith. I'm deeply disappointed in where we find ourselves in 2006 America.

STRUGGLE OVER NATIVITY SCENES ON PUBLIC PROPERTY

Menendez, Albert. *The December Wars: Religious Symbols and Ceremonies in the Public Square*. Prometheus Books, 1993. Traces the dispute over nativity scenes on public property as far back as the fourth century, when Catholic orthodoxy turned Christmas into a major propaganda tool as well as a religious observance. Over the centuries there has been a surprising amount of disagreement among the various Christian sects about the nature of the Christmas observance, and even whether it should be observed or not.

PEW

DECEMBER 19,
2013

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Celebrating Christmas, Then and Now

Only about half of Americans see Christmas mostly as a religious holiday, while one-third view it as more of a cultural holiday. Younger adults are less likely than older ones to incorporate religious elements into their holiday celebrations. [READ MORE >](#)

END CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2013

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Dick Bennett

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National/International Days

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Christmas Day is a public holiday. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed. Family feasts are often a part of Christmas Day celebrations. ©iStockphoto.com/ Lisa Thornberg. It is also unclear when December 25 became associated with the birth of Jesus, although it may have been around two hundred years after his birth. In the early centuries of Christianity, the anniversary of the birth of Jesus was not a cause for celebrations. The idea of turning this day into a celebration started in the early Middle Ages in Europe. During Reformation and up until the middle of the 1800s, Christmas was often not celebrated because partying and merry making was seen as unchristian. From about 1840, celebrating Christmas became more widespread. While this version isn't officially on the album, the live unplugged version is. itunes.apple.com/us/album/completion/id648850881. Discover Pieter T : www.facebook.com/PieterTofficial. Special thanks and credits to my fellow City Love Band members Nevin Ramos : Guitar Niko Ramos : Bass. RnB Pieter T NZ. Show more.