

**Crossville Church  
of Christ**

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# COMPASS

**Using God's Word to Chart The Course  
Of A Congregation**

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**Elders:**

Frank Bohannon

Bill Foland

Al Griffin

Jonathan Loveday

Larry McDuffee

Clyde Randolph

**Deacons:**

Jim Bell

Kyle Fairman

Jimmy Harris

David Kerley

Doug Loveday

Greg Maxwell

Brian McLaughlin

Mark Roberts

Roger Smith

Jon Tatum

Jason Wyatt

Jerry Wood

**Minister:**

Barry Kennedy

**Missionaries:**

Don Iverson

Jim Waldron

(India)

**Service Times**

Sunday Bible Study 9 AM

Sunday Worship 10 AM

6 PM

Wednesday 6 PM

**OTHER ACTIVITIES:**

**Ladies Bible Class**

Tuesdays 11AM

**Prayer Meeting**

Tuesdays 10 AM

**Joyful Generation**

(Youth Devotional & fellowship)

1st Sunday 7:00 PM

**December 25, 2011**

*“For He saith to the  
snow, Be thou on the  
earth; likewise to the  
small rain, and to the  
great rain of his  
strength” (Job 37:6).*



## SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION

**Steve Higginbotham**

Personally, I relish Christmas as one of my favorite holidays. The children, presents, decorations, excitement...they all combine to make Christmas a special time for my family and me. However, in the midst of all the fun, I can't help but be a bit disturbed by all the biblical ignorance or inaccuracies associated with Christmas. Many cannot separate fact from fiction when it comes to the biblical account of the birth of Jesus. For example, the following statements are thought to be fact by many people, but are in reality, fiction. (Check your own Bible and see for yourself!)

**FICTION:** The angel Gabriel appeared to Joseph to inform him concerning Jesus.

**FACT:** While the angel Gabriel did appear to Mary, and an angel did appear to Joseph, but the Bible does not say it was the angel, Gabriel.

**FICTION:** There were three wise men who came to see Jesus.

**FACT:** The Bible doesn't tell us how many wise men came to see Jesus. It tells us that three gifts were presented, but it doesn't necessarily follow that there must have also been three wise men.

**FICTION:** The three wise men were three kings from the orient.

**FACT:** The Bible doesn't say the wise men were kings.

**FICTION:** A bright star appeared in the sky and led the wise men to the manger.

**FACT:** The Bible says the star appeared above the house where Jesus was, not the manger Matthew 2:9-11.

**FICTION:** The wise men visited Jesus at the manger.

**FACT:** The Bible says that the wise men visited Jesus when he was in a house Matthew 2:11. At the time of their visit, Jesus is called a "child" rather than a "baby" Matthew 2:11. In fact, he may have been as old as two Matthew 2:7,16.

**FICTION:** A bright star appeared to the shepherds in the field and led them to the manger.

**FACT:** The Bible does not say anything about a star leading the shepherds to the manger.

**FICTION:** Mary rode a donkey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

**FACT:** The Bible makes no mention of a donkey and doesn't say how Mary made her way to Bethlehem.

It's surprisingly easy for us to believe as fact, what is in reality fiction. Furthermore, this "fiction" is sometimes propagated by religion. How many church lawns and "Christmas re-enactments" will portray a nativity scene which inaccurately portrays the biblical account?

Now here's my point: If we can be misinformed by religious leaders, concerning the events surrounding something as fundamental as the birth of Jesus, what's to make us think we can't be misled regarding other religious matters?

Friends, make sure your faith is not based on what others have told you is true, but rather make sure your faith is based on what you know to be true from your own personal study. Let the fiction you see perpetuated on church lawn's and in church "pageants" this holiday season be a reminder and a warning to you to do your own Bible study and not be content with what others say.

*"Prove all things; Hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).*

# CONTROVERSY AT CHRISTMAS TIME

CARL GARNER

Some of us have mixed feelings about the controversy over the Christmas season. It has its roots in our newfound sensitivity to those without a "Christian" background or foundation. Retail stores all over our nation are substituting the word "holiday" for "Christmas" to keep from offending anyone in their advertisements. However, even more people are distressed and angry that religious thought appears to be given less and less respect as time goes by. It is true that "anti-Christian" sentiment has grown in recent years. Websites on the Internet that foster skeptic or agnostic beliefs have grown in number. On the other side, religious leaders have marshaled their forces to counter this tendency. I must admit I have some sympathy for both viewpoints. Biblically, there is not one ounce of encouragement for a celebration of Jesus' birth. His birth was and is a most marvelous event, primarily because God came down to dwell among His people. In the words of the Bible we read: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* (John 1:1, 14) Paul also described this event in Philippians 2:5-11. There, Paul tells us of Jesus' willingness to redeem man, even though it would involve temptation, pain and suffering. As remarkable as that birth was and is, it takes a "back seat," biblically, to His resurrection. When the Gospel is given description in I Corinthians 15, the emphasis is not on His birth, but His resurrection. Verses 3-4 say: *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.* (I Cor. 15:3-4) Jesus' birth brought the Savior to man, but Jesus' death brings man to the Savior through the Gospel!

Why, then, is there sympathy for the other view? Many of us are deeply concerned about the direction that our nation is taking. In so many ways, godly attitudes and actions are more likely to be ridiculed than respected today. Taking "Christmas" out of our culture is one of many bold steps that are now being taken that will lead us to humanism and secularism. Strangely enough, a large majority of Americans still "believe in God." Valid surveys bear this out, and the latest numbers I have seen indicate that "believers" outnumber "non-believers" 9-1. Yet, as has become common, a small minority seems to have more "clout" than the majority. Today's entertainment, education, and literature all seem to lean as far away from the good, the godly, the righteous ways of man as possible. Alcoholism, pornography, perversion and divorce are commonplace today even in a society claiming belief in God. Christians have fought battles, swimming upstream and against the current for centuries, but we still long to see our nation return to her roots, to principles that exhibit respect for God and His creation.

There is no question that today's "Christmas" has become a national holiday. Can a Christian observe this day without violating biblical principles? You do not have to believe December 25th is Jesus' birthday to exchange gifts, take the day off for family and friends, and recall the days of youth. The "tree and ornaments" have no foundation in the birth of Jesus. Eating turkey and watching "A Wonderful Life" has nothing to do with Jesus' birthday. Being with family, exchanging gifts, and singing "White Christmas" all make up the good part of this season. I do not see how anyone can *claim* to honor biblical principles while *practicing* that for which there is *no* biblical authority—celebrating this season as a religious holiday. To do so is to speak where the Bible does *not* speak, and to remain silent when the Bible *does* speak. This we must not do, Colossians 3:17. Will the present trend continue? Will our nation eventually become a nation that ignores its heritage? Will we finally be a collection of humanists, denying the existence of God and opposing every Bible influence? Who can say? Is that pessimism? Or is it realism? I, for one, will give my wife, my children and my grandchildren gifts [in December]—not because some think Jesus was born in December, but because I love my family and I have the opportunity to be with them on that national holiday.