

# The Ghost of Christmas Never

Wayland Bryant Jackson

Some call me Grinch. I call myself reasonable. When I was a child, I was a costumed Wise Man who came to see the newborn babe in our little church pageant. Before Christmas, I went to the dime store, bought a gift for everyone on my list, and came home with change. We brought in a dying tree, decorated it, and put it in our front window. Christmas was about church and exchanging gifts.

Today, Jesus and religion have been largely nudged out of the season in favor of Charlie Brown, Santa, Frosty, and the Grinch. Ask any child. Christmas is about getting stuff. While Ukraine staggers under the Russian bombardment, fighting for their very existence, Americans spend billions buying junk on Black Friday.

Churches, like simpering children, follow the trends, struggling to perpetuate the dying myth that Christmas is religious since nothing about the 20th-century holiday has even a remote connection to the Christ myth. They seem to be saying to the culture: "If we can't lick 'em, we'll join 'em."

My suggestions: don't put up a decorated tree. A tree has no connection to the Christ myth. No adults should exchange gifts. Children (I'm caving in) should get a couple of gifts. The religious should celebrate *every day of the year*, not just December 25. Merchants should sell items that are not collectible trash. For the

sincerely religious, decorate a cake with 2,025 candles and see how they lighten the room. Happy birthday, Jesus.

Yours forever,

Wayland Jackson