

Unsettling Christmas

By [Drew G. I. Hart](#)

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Christmas is a great time to resist the lure of the western Christian tradition that domesticates the story of Jesus so much so that it is no longer an unsettling force and reality in our society.

Instead of Jesus coming in solidarity with those on the margins (as seen through his birth in Bethlehem surrounded by shepherds), as a threat to the authorities (as was demonstrated by Herods' attempt to execute him while he was still young), or a leveling of the distribution of power and resources in society (as sung by Mary and proclaimed by John the Baptist), the American/western Jesus that has been handed down to us has watered down or ignored every attempt and effort of scripture being read against our current reality and lives. Radical repentance towards following Jesus and reorienting our lives to the kingdom of God is no longer necessary because the American Christmas promises a Jesus that fits quite comfortably within our current lives as they already are.

The takeaway from the American Christmas is, don't worry, no significant change is necessary, just "remember the reason for this season." Fortunately, the Messiah of God has more to offer us than that. And despite all the noise (not of Santa, but the noise of the pseudo Jesus story we have been bamboozled with that focuses on sweet baby Jesus and gives us warm fuzzy feelings), if you seek out for the treasure in the field, you can still find it. And it is worth finding, because once you have people are willing to trade everything in for this greater thing of greater value.

So this Christmas, I invite us to immerse ourselves in the Jesus story and then drop everything in hopes of encountering the living Jesus that is present in the world today. In the birth, life, teachings, death, and resurrection, and in our own participating in the life of Jesus Christ today, one finds a true Christmas miracle that the world is waiting for. It is good news for you and your neighbor, as well as for our troubled world in need of deliverance and healing.

Merry Christmas.

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