

# After 2,000 Years the Message Still Cannot Be Silenced



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Source: AP Photo/Russell Contreras

Good vs, evil, moral failure followed by redemption, forgiveness, unconditional love, sacrifice, equality, free will, liberty; these are concepts deeply ingrained in the human spirit regardless of a person's religious beliefs.

They are the themes of great novels and movies. Civilizations have been established on their principles—“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, the Pursuit of Happiness...”

These are not concepts that evolved on their own, millennia after we supposedly crawled out of the primordial soup. They are what set us apart from the animals, what negate the law of the jungle, turning Neo-Darwinism’s “survival of the fittest” on its head

. **It is the Imago Dei.**

Man has the image of God stamped on his soul. “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness,’ (Genesis 1:26 - NIV). And then God breathed a spirit into the first man, Adam.

To deny the existence of human spirituality—the Imago Dei—or to equate it with some medieval myth or a pernicious “[God delusion](#)” is absurd. It is akin to denying that humans have two eyes or two legs or the capacity to reason and to think creatively.

Yet this is the stretch that atheists have to make in order to deny the truth of what we celebrate this month—the birth of Jesus Christ, the God-man, the long-awaited Messiah.

Their denial is instructive. Not content to ignore the message of Christmas it rears its ugly head in [annual battles](#) over Nativity displays and similar Christian-phobic tantrums. This betrays a deep-seated insecurity in their own belief system. And in attempts to quell this insecurity—what is in reality the faint echo of Eden nagging at their consciences—they lash out to silence the message as well as the messengers.

[Joni Mitchel](#) may have written that “we are stardust,” [quoting Carl Sagan](#), and we are “billion yard-old carbon.” but even she could not escape the realization that “**we have to get ourselves back to the garden.**”

Satan tried to **silence the message** and The Messenger in another garden—Gethsemane. Herod tried in Bethlehem when he

ordered the slaughter of the innocents. The Romans and the Jews tried it on that dark day when the Son of God hung on a cross between Earth and Heaven.

“It is finished,” Jesus cried and all thought they had finally succeeded. But three days later, an empty tomb proved them wrong and changed history forever.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”

Merry Christmas everybody.

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*next article follows below*

REAL AMERICA

# Come in from the cold

**Exclusive: Patrice Lewis invites unbelievers to get to know the Christmas feast's Honored Guest**



By [Patrice Lewis](#)

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There is a passage from a book called "[Not Buying It: My Year Without Shopping](#)" by Judith Levine. Disgusted with what she sees as a consumer culture in New York City, this progressive author and her "partner" embarked on a year-long project to buy nothing but necessities. I find it an interesting (if cynical) read.

But one particular passage always leaps out at me. While taking a late-evening walk on Christmas Eve to visit some friends, the author (an atheist) and her partner spontaneously slip into the back of a small church during the candlelit service. To her surprise, Ms. Levine finds herself weeping. "[P]erhaps I weep in envy of faith," she writes. "The comfort of knowing *anything* without skepticism. An atheist never really comes in from the cold."

The aching pathos of those words haunted me from the first time I read them. They are a naked glimpse into an atheist's soul. She's right, of course. An atheist never really *does* come in from the cold. This realization seems especially poignant at Christmas when so many people are rejoicing.

The Bible references celebrations all the time. Jesus' first recorded miracle took place at a celebration (the wedding at Cana). But in all cases Scripture makes it clear these celebrations have a *point*, a purpose. And the purpose in each of these celebrations is to honor a guest, whether it's a king or a bridegroom or a foreign diplomat or a passing visitor or a Messiah in a manger.

A feast *without* a guest of honor is meaningless, like a wedding without a bridegroom. It's merely an exercise in gluttony and excess. Overindulgence is kind of fun, to be sure, but don't mistake "fun" with "meaningful," because they're not the same thing.

Christmas, of course, celebrates the ultimate Guest of Honor. Everything we do – sing carols, give gifts, smile at strangers, donate to charity, decorate our homes, build gingerbread houses, see "The Nutcracker," sing Handel's "Messiah" as a [flash mob](#) in a mall – all these things consciously or unconsciously celebrate the birth of a very special baby, the ultimate Honored Guest.

When unbelievers feel a keen ache from their lack of belief – as is written in the passage above – it's because they've caught a glimpse of that Honored Guest but know they won't meet him. Or more precisely, they *refuse* to meet him. They deny He exists. They cannot or will not take the opportunity to say hello, and in doing so they miss out on unbelievable richness and joy.

They also miss out on the biggest gifts of all: forgiveness, grace, salvation and eternal life. These are the ultimate gifts that keep on giving. Nothing purchased from the mall can ever equal them in value.

It's an interesting development to watch those who don't like the Honored Guest do everything in their power to make sure others won't ever catch a glimpse of Him either. They're grudgingly willing to permit a celebration ("winter parties"), but they insist on making it a party without a point (a wedding without a groom? a book without a plot? a song without a melody? a birthday party without a birthday?). They simply cannot swallow the idea that most people celebrate *for a reason*. We instinctively recognize there should be an honored guest at a party. We understand that a celebration without a point is, well, pointless.

Atheists can fill their lives with material goods. They can fill their lives with love for their spouse and kids. They can fill their lives with good works and charity. But there will *always* be an emptiness inside them, that classic God-shaped hole in their heart,

whether or not they're willing to admit it. And the thing is, it's so easy to fill that hole.

But unbelievers resist. They stay out in the cold, pressing their noses against the windowpane and seeing inside a room filled with warmth and light and joy. Even though entrance is free and their presence would be warmly welcomed, they prefer to stay outside and ridicule those who choose to go in and enjoy the party.

The key point so many unbelievers miss is that faith seldom comes in a blinding road-to-Damascus flash. Rather, it takes time and practice. I would never hand you a violin and shove you unprepared in front of an audience at Carnegie Hall – the experience would traumatize you and make you hate violins and fear performances.

But years of steady practice would overcome that fear and hatred. Practice allows you to squeak and screech and make mistakes and get discouraged in private. But you'll improve. You may never perform at Carnegie Hall, but you might share the joy of your violin music with family and friends.

For most people, a belief and faith in God also takes time and practice. A lot of atheists were, sometime in their past, shoved onto the stage at Carnegie Hall unprepared (so to speak). The experience traumatized them. They learned to hate God and loathe religion.

As a result, many never *practice believing*. They never attend church. They never read the Bible. They never talk to anyone whose gentle guidance might help them ease that fear and loathing and discover the joy of faith. It's not hard to accept faith as a little child at first. Children don't comprehend their gifts, they just accept them. Comprehension – faith – comes later.

And so, unbelievers stay out in the cold, hating God and rejecting His gifts. Since the *magnitude* of those gifts cannot be grasped, understood, or appreciated until they're accepted, unbelievers continue to scorn them as unnecessary. They tell people who have already accepted those gifts that they're weak, ignorant

and wrong. Some even take those gifts and spit on them before throwing them away.

And that's sad, achingly sad ... because the gifts available at the celebration are fabulous. They're greater than us, greater than everything. They're also available to *everyone*, regardless of whether someone accepts them or not.

Thankfully, unbelievers are welcome to join the party anytime. They're welcome to help themselves to the gifts anytime. They're welcome to meet the Honored Guest anytime. There are a lot of freebies out there, available for the taking. Anytime.

So for anyone who hasn't yet come in out of the cold, for Pete's sake open the door and come inside! There are gifts aplenty. I think you'll find that party is a whole lot more fun when it has a purpose – and when you get to know that Honored Guest.

I wish you all, believers and unbelievers alike, a blessed and gift-filled Christmas. Come and join the celebration. Come in from the cold.

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