

# REDEEMING CHRISTMAS

Many of us have seen the movie *Christmas with the Kranks*. It was based on John Grisham's book, Skipping Christmas, which revolved around the idea that it is easier, cheaper, and simpler to go on a cruise than to worry with all the decorating, gifts, parties, and cards that go with this holiday. In the movie, the Kranks attempt to do all these things at the last minute when their daughter unexpectedly returns from overseas.

Because Christmas has been hijacked by Satan to steal, kill, and destroy, we may also be tempted to skip Christmas to avoid all the work and hassle, but I challenge us to do something much more difficult: to redeem Christmas. To transform all of the business and busyness in order to bring something godly from all of the otherwise godless commotion.

In many ways, our Christmas activities, even for Christians, are actually anti-Christian. When we spend and eat more than we should, we contradict the very teachings of good stewardship by the One who was born on this day. When our decorations glorify someone or something other than Jesus, they leave out the most important part of all. And when our music, greetings, and cards are simply celebrations of the celebration, Christmas becomes godless at best, and ungodly at worst.

Instead of buying most of our gifts for those who have too much already, how about spending the resources God has blessed us with to advance the work Jesus came to inaugurate? To bless ministries and individuals at home and abroad that are advancing the Gospel, healing the sick, and encouraging the lonely? Instead of decorating with godless themes, let's put Christ at the center, and let's highlight Him in our cards and our music as well. This day is all about Him!!

Even our emotions can be hijacked during the holidays if we focus on anyone or anything other than Jesus. Instead of broken relationships, failed dreams, and lost loved ones, let us focus on the Redeemer who came to make something good from our sin-stained lives. Let's celebrate and worship the One who died and rose again to make it possible for us to see our departed loved ones again if they and we both are trusting in Him. These are the real reasons for Christmas that bring great joy and gladness, and we discount Jesus Christ when we focus on anything else.

For Christians, the focus of Christmas must clearly, overwhelmingly, and obviously be Jesus. Not family, not gifts, not anything else. He must be the centerpiece of this day and every other day of our lives, and all of our celebrating, decorating, and gift-giving must complement, match, and relate to Him. When we allow Him to be our centerpiece

of Christmas, He can then help us to redeem it from all the anti-Christian activity it has become. Let's invite Jesus to help us not skip but redeem the celebration of His holy birth.

**George Bowers, - CBC EX. Board**

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## **Weekly Prayer Point**

**Luke 1:39-56.** This is the "Song of Mary." Mary has received a visit from the angel Gabriel. She then travels to be with Elizabeth, a relative. She speaks of the greatness of God as well as His strength, wisdom, service to the lowly, and mercy. Pray that we also might speak of God's greatness as well as His strength, mercy, and wisdom and let us, like Jesus, serve the lowly in love.

### **Please pray for these congregations and pastors:**

- Gitsimbi Congregation in Rwanda, Africa and Pastor Salomon Rushigatjiki
- Greenmount Congregation in Rockingham, VA and Pastor Scott Harris

### **CBC Prayer Committee**