

## *Celebration Of The Worlds Holy-Days (Holidays)*

[Religious Festivals](#) – This is a short essay by Bro. J.C. Choate, American evangelist in India, concerning the disciples participation in religious festivals. 1970. He offers the viewpoint of the Indian brethren, and asks what these brethren would find practiced by their American brethren. The type of religious festivals in view are Christmas, Easter, and the like. The essay also addresses other ‘secular holidays’, and would / could apply to nationalistic and otherwise non-christian holidays such as St. Patrick’s Day, Halloween, Independence Day, Veteran’s Day, Thanksgiving, etc. Brother Choate does not play the ‘freedom in Christ’ / ‘expediency’ card, but takes a Christ-honoring approach. While there are no specific Bible references in the essay, it is good food for circumspect thought.

### Religious Festivals, By Bro. J.C. Choate

Here in India, as throughout most of Asia, the government is confronted with the problem of trying to keep officially recognized numerous religious festivals and set aside holidays appropriate to each religion.

Brethren in the States who are surrounded by others who believe in Christ, and who may have never been confronted by nothing more than Christmas and Easter, would certainly be in for a shock to come into a part of the world where these so-called Christian festivals are considered on par with Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jain religious celebrations. These different religions celebrate their leaders birthday, death, and other important events in their lives, with great pomp and ceremony. The the so-called Christians come right along in their steps with the same pomp and pageantry to celebrate the birth of their leader or to remember his death, burial, and resurrection. All of these religions have their share of customs, traditions, and make believe to perpetrate. The majority of the people dress gayly, celebrate wildly, and spend heavily of money that they have had to borrow in many cases to be able to keep up with their neighbors. All of the celebrating is about the same – only the subject of the celebration is changed from time to time.

I have asked my brethren here if they felt that they could go out and celebrate with the Hindus, Muslims, and others during their religious holidays. They all answered in one voice: NO. I asked them if they felt that they could do it if they left the religious emphasis off and did it merely on the basis of it being a secular holiday. The responded by asking, “But how would such be possible?” No, my brethren here do not participate in religious festivals of any kind — religious or secular — in the name of non-Christian religions or in the name of the religion of Christ.

My brethren, neither can we as American Christians go along with religious festivals such as Christmas and Easter. To argue that we are celebrating it in a non-religious way is silly. Who would believe it? When a Christian puts up his tree, his lights, and goes through most of the other customs and traditions, except perhaps in attending a religious service, how can he say that it is not celebrating Christmas? Of course he is celebrating it, and his children will carry on the tradition, and on and on it will go. Not only so, but if we do not rid ourselves of such hypocrisy I predict that within a few years the church will be having its own Christmas services right along with the other religious groups around it. A stand has to be taken — for it or against it. To compromise on this only leads to its eventual acceptance, which seems to be the direction the majority are going in at this time.

Most brethren say they don’t believe in it but then practice it. They say that it doesn’t mean anything to them but just try to get one of them to give it up. I am afraid that my Indian brethren would be shocked if they could observe your involvement in Christmas just as you would be shocked if you found your brethren here participating in any way in the different religious celebrations that are peculiar to this area. But don’t worry, should you come, you won’t find them to involved. The question is: Would they be able to understand some of your actions should they come your way?

New Delhi, India

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