



The Good News

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Appeasing The Masses

By Michael McCleary

In an article on Nov. 14th, 2006, the Associated Press explained how that Beverly Hills Teddy Bear Co. had produced 4,000 Bible-quoting Jesus dolls to give to the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation to pass out to needy children that coming holiday season. The company's 'one2believe' division had produced these dolls that quote such Scriptures as "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3) and "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:39). The director of the division, Michael La Roe, expressed surprise when he found out that Toys for Tots was turning down the offer of the Jesus dolls. "I believe as a church-going person, anyone can benefit from hearing the words of the Bible," he was quoted as saying in the article. Toys for Tots vice-president, Bill Grein, explained that the foundation did not know what the religious affiliation of the children they would be helping was and that, "We can't take a chance on sending a talking Jesus doll to a Jewish family or a Muslim family. Kids want a gift for the holiday season that is fun." On Nov. 16th, Toys for Tots reconsidered the offer and had decided to accept the dolls, saying that they had "found appropriate places" for them.

I know this example is nearly 13 years old, and I am not advocating turning our Lord into a toy doll, but consider the major issue that we have seen play out over and over again in hundreds of examples just like it: We see how the world will go out of its way to appease the masses on all of their religious (or non-religious) platforms.

All of us can see the way society is turning in order to accommodate all belief systems and all ways of life. When faithful men stand up against error and sin, society labels them as "bigots". "How can someone who claims to follow Christ, be so intolerant of other's beliefs and feelings?! Jesus taught love." They

might say. I don't recall Jesus being tolerant of the moneychangers in the temple in John 2:14ff. Yet, we see the age of tolerating everyone is here, as is the age of intolerance toward people who disagree with the voice of society. Brethren, the world is simply going to get worse and worse. When will the day come when we will be openly persecuted for our stand in the truth of God's word? There are many religious individuals who are currently being blacklisted or pressured as it is. Certain news outlets keep a running tab on all of the religious persecutions currently underway in our country.

Consider the brethren at Pergamos, in Rev. 2:12ff. Some of the brethren were holding fast the name of Christ in the face of persecution, even to the point of Antipas dying for His name. Yet we see two groups of those brethren, those who followed the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, who had compromised their faith and tried to be on both sides: the side of God, and the side of the society in Pergamos which worshipped idols, in an effort to avoid persecution. What would be the end of them? Jesus says they, and the church, must repent, or He would come against them with the "sword of My mouth".

Will we compromise our faith, and our Lord, by backing off because someone might get offended by what we say? Was Jesus ever so sensitive to the feelings of the Jews that He would sugar-coat the truth? No, indeed we hear Him say things like, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." (Matt. 24:27) Jesus didn't sugar-coat the truth. Will we choose to appease the masses? "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity against God?" (James 4:4)