Christmas 2016
by Paulette Callen

On the morning after election day in America, I find myself writing a far different blog about Christmas than I had originally intended. [A blog submission was requested by my publisher and I have decided to also post it here on my own site.]

Midwinter celebrations of light, in many varieties, have long been part of human culture, but Christmas is unique in that the Christ is the incarnate symbol of the Light in the Darkness. And, while I have not been a practicing Christian for many years (my dissatisfaction has been with churches, not Jesus of Nazareth), I have always enjoyed the holiday. The glitter and shine of American Christmases never bothered me – I like lights and presents, sparkly trees and tinsel and Old World Santas, the music, the Christmas specials on TV. And I have, more importantly, appreciated the Story. The Greatest Story Ever Told. But to me it is a *story*. To me that is important. Stories are important. Human beings developed speech I think to tell stories as much as to say, "The wooly mammoth went that way." And our stories resonate truth, often, on many levels, some deeper than the words used to express them, and independent of whatever facts or history might or might not be the foundation of the story being told.

This morning I see Christmas as the national symbol of American hypocrisy. This is not new for me but has never felt so visceral. As a thirteen-year-old confirmation student, I asked my Lutheran pastor why we call ourselves a Christian country and have "In God We Trust" on our money when what we trust in is our military. He merely laughed at my childishness. I do not believe that we should give up our military, I just think we can drop the hypocrisy.

Too many American voters (most, if not all, of whom would describe themselves in no uncertain terms as Christian) have just decided in favor of self-interest over compassion and have voted for the prince of liars.

I may not even plug in my small fiber optic Christmas tree this season.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

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