

Bill O'Reilly Spins Christmas
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Mr. Bill O'Reilly, host of Fox News' "The Factor", spent considerable airtime this past Christmas season calling out liberals, atheists, and some politicians for "waging a war on Christmas". He is correct in pointing out that mainstream "liberalism" is devoted to ridiculing religion in general; it is also true that atheists have sometimes gone to extreme lengths to eliminate all publicly-displayed symbols that can be remotely tied to a religion. Actually, not all public displays of religion are under attack: there is never a criticism of Islam, Kwanzaa, or Marxism.

But in any case, Mr. O'Reilly was very critical of those who are trying to eliminate any hint of Christian symbols in public. His main argument is: atheists and secularists are wrong to seek removal of certain objects associated with Christianity (such as the manger scenes, Christmas trees, and Santa Claus) because all of these are simply traditions and do not represent a religion per se. He argued that it is misguided for atheists to reject Christmas symbols on the grounds that the word "Christmas" constitutes establishment of religion by the state.

As Mr. O'Reilly carefully explained to his (atheist) guest Mr. David Silverman: "It is a fact that Christianity is not a religion. It is a philosophy." [1]

So Mr. O'Reilly has proclaimed that Christianity is a philosophy. I guess that shows how stupid I am. I've always thought that Jesus *Christ* had authority to determine what *Christianity* is and is not. For the sake of completeness, here is what Jesus Christ said about Himself, and thus, about Christianity [2]:

Matt 10:32, 33 Whoever acknowledges me [Jesus Christ] before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

John 3:17, 18 For God did not send his Son [Jesus Christ] into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him [Christ] is not condemned but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

John 4:25, 26 The woman [at the well at Sychar in Samaria] said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us". Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

John 14:5, 6 Thomas [the apostle] said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

It is clear that Christianity is not simply a philosophy. But nor is it a religion, which is any system by which man seeks to pacify or gain the favor of God -- Christianity is a *relationship* with God. I hope that clears things up.

[1] *The O'Reilly Factor*, 28 Nov 2012

[2] Scripture quotations per the New International Version, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995; explanations in square brackets are mine