

At this time of year the Christmas music soundtrack is everywhere. Maybe by now you are getting tired of hearing the same music over and over again. Perhaps you are tuning it out and not paying attention. Its just become noise in the background.

A few days ago I was in the grocery store. The Christmas music was playing - but I was not really paying attention. It was just there. All of a sudden I did listen and right then in the juice aisle I heard a smash up of the secular and the sacred. The ultimate mash up.

This is what I heard:

[Verse 1]

Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus, right down Santa Claus Lane
Vixen and Blitzen and all his reindeers pulling on the reins
Bells are ringing, children singing, all is merry and bright
So hang your stockings and say your prayers, 'cause Santa Claus comes tonight

[Verse 2]

Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus, right down Santa Claus Lane
He's got a bag that's filled with toys for boys and girls again
Hear those sleigh bells jingle jangle, oh what a beautiful sight
So jump in bed and cover your head, 'cause Santa Claus comes tonight

[Verse 3]

Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus, right down Santa Claus Lane

He doesn't care if you're rich or poor, he loves you just the same
Santa Claus knows we're all God's children, that makes everything right

So fill your hearts with Christmas cheer, 'cause Santa Claus comes tonight

[Verse 4]

Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus, right down Santa Claus Lane

He'll come around when chimes ring out that it's Christmas morn'
again

Peace on Earth will come to all if we just follow the light

So let's give thanks to the lord above, 'cause Santa Claus comes tonight

[Verse 1]

Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus, right down Santa Claus Lane

Vixen and Blitzen and all his reindeers pulling on the reins

Bells are ringing, children singing, all is merry and bright

Hang your stockings and say your prayers, 'cause Santa Claus comes tonight

Yes, Gene Autry singing about Santa arriving combined with saying your prayers, peace on earth, following the light.

I have heard this Christmas song many many times over years. I have hummed along - I have probably sung along - especially as a child.

But I never really considered how bizarre it is! Secular meets sacred in the form of Santa Claus. Was Gene Autry **really** suggesting that Santa Claus is a bit like Jesus?

We have spent the past 3 weeks in preparation and in waiting for the day we will celebrate the birth of the Christ child. And we know that children all over the world have also been waiting for the arrival of Santa Claus.

And for the most part we keep these things separate. We wait and prepare for Christ here in worship. And we wait and prepare for Santa's arrival in other parts of our lives.

But this Christmas song puts it together. And its only this year that it struck me. I have really never paid attention to what was being said. I never really paid attention.

But if we take a moment and a step back and really think about it Gene Autry might have something here. Maybe we really do mash up the secular and the sacred. Maybe we are not keeping them as separate as we think we are. The angel decorations are right beside the santa's. The

star on the top of the tree that is decorated with everything but religious symbols!

Maybe the lines have blurred a bit. Maybe we, as a society have confused things a bit. Maybe as a society we have it a little mixed up. Santa is not Christ. We know that. Santa does come on the same day - ok we are good with that. Santa is not like John the Baptist pointing us toward Christ. I do not think Santa will bring peace on earth as Gene Autry seems to be suggesting. And I agree that we should be following the light - the light that is Christ - the light of the world. We are not supposed to follow a jolly man in a red suit. But I will agree with him that we are all God's children and that makes everything right!

AMEN