



Lone Wolf Theatre Company

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Lone Wolf Howl: CHRISTMAS REALLY IN JUNE? WELL, IT TRULY COULD BE

(Originally published in [Calgary Country](#): June 16, 2005)

for [Calgary Country](#) — Only 191 shopping days left 'til Christmas. Or 4,584 hours. Or 275,040 minutes. It's a good thing the developers in Cochrane are slamming the pedestrian plans for downtown because who'd want to waste a single one of those precious minutes walking for heaven's sake? (Please note: By saying "for heaven's sake" I am in no way endorsing or promoting the idea of heaven or any celestial kingdom as defined by Christian theology. I don't believe in it.)

Oops. Now there's only 275,039 minutes left. Better hurry. You can track the time yourself on [www.christmas.com](#) (where even the seconds are counted down).

The web site, run out of that great basin of Christianity known as the American Midwest, defines Christmas on their homepage as being "ultimately about the celebration of the birth of Jesus" (with a handy sidebar inviting you to shop their extensive list of sponsors). To top off your holiday surfing experience, there's a link entitled 'God Loves You' with the tantalizing tag line of "how to know that God loves you" beneath it."

Yup.

If you think I'm being premature in writing about Christmas in June, then may I remind you that the astronomical basis of the season starts on the 21st of this month. Darkness begins its return to the world on the summer solstice, and will continue its advent until there's only four shopping days left. Thereupon the winter solstice dawns in December, and we are slowly brought back into the light for another six months.

Truth be told, we really don't know the actual birth date of Jesus of Nazareth. Early church fathers piggy-backed on the shoulders of pagans by having them share their ancient solstice celebration symbolizing the return of light into the world. Whether it was the God of the Sun or the Son of God made no matter, and so Christmas is celebrated in December. For all we know, Jesus could have been born in mid June. (Please note: though I bandy about the words 'Christmas' and 'Jesus,' I am in no way promulgating the concept of a divine figure born unto the world in the guise of a simple Jewish carpenter. I don't believe in his divinity.)

Heaven. God. Jesus. Christmas. Like children in a sandbox, Christians (and Christian-based governments) have been sharing these words admirably with everyone else for, well, gosh, nearly 2,000 years. Mother Church, historically speaking, has been particularly tireless in Her campaign of sharing and She's employed some awfully effective methodology down through the ages (dark and otherwise) to ensure the intended recipients accept Her generosity.

Regardless of when it occurs or the truth behind its origins, there's one thing we can be sure of when it comes to Christmas: a debate will rage up over whether or not to change the name. And as sure as there's going to be a Boxing Day sale at The Brick, Christian groups will respond to said debate with the argument that if the word is changed -- if 'Christ' is taken out of 'Christmas' -- it would lose all of its meaning.

(Quick update: only 275,036 minutes left.)

Christmas, or whatever you want to call it, will be coming early to some of our fellow Canadians when the federal Liberals succeed in pushing Bill C-38 through the House of Commons this month, making Canada only the third country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage.

Christian fundamentalists rarely mince their words, so it's pretty clear where they stand on the issue. The collective sandbox gets a bit more confusing when the moderates share their reaction: "Grant those people the same rights, the same privileges, as any married couple but call it something else. Call it a common-law agreement, call it a civil union, but for heaven's sake," they sing, carol-like, in chorus, "don't call it a marriage."

The word 'marriage,' they argue, would lose all its meaning. Thus, those same Christians -- who are more than eager to share many of their words (and who can get hot under the Roman collar when anyone says 'no thank you' to their offer) -- steadfastly refuse to share this one.

Watching my kids play with other children, I admonish them to share all their toys, not just the ones they got many a Christmas ago. Here's hoping Heavenly Father will someday tell the same to His vociferous brood.

Only 275,034 minutes left.

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