

## File under Bah Humbug!

Dennis Coday | Dec. 3, 2009 NCR Today

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### **Bishop rips beloved carols as 'nonsense'**

LONDON (RNS) -- A leading Church of England bishop has slammed a number of the world's favorite Christmas carols, saying some have "nonsense" words that are embarrassing and others reek of "Victorian behavior control."

Bishop Nick Baines of Croydon said "all sorts of fantasies have grown up around Christmas" that leave many people thinking of the celebration as "nothing more than some sort of fairy story."

In his new book, "Why Wish You a Merry Christmas," Baines cites the line in "Away in a Manger" that goes "no crying He makes," and wonders, "How can any adult sing this without embarrassment?"

"It's nonsense," he says, adding that he finds it "slightly bizarre" that parents could sing that carol "as if it actually related to reality."

In the carol "Once in Royal David's City," a particular favorite in Britain, its line "mild, obedient, good as He" smacks of "Victorian behavior," Baines said.

For good measure, the bishop attacks another well-loved Christmas hymn, "O Come, All Ye Faithful," suggesting that it should more accurately be called "O Come All Ye Faithless."

Baines noted that it was not the "faithful" but the shepherds -- "the great unwashed," as he described them -- and the "pagan" Wise Men who went to see the baby Jesus.

The bishop describes such Christmas fantasies as "nothing short of tragic, because nothing could be further from the truth."

?Al Webb, Religion News Service