

# JAMES MADISON UNIV. CENSORS CHRISTMAS

"Mary Did You Know" is a song that cannot be tolerated at James Madison University. Lyrics include, "Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?" It also contains lyrics which note that when Mary kisses her baby, she has "kissed the face of God."

This song was to be sung on Dec. 11 at the annual "Unity Tree" [read: Christmas tree] lighting ceremony. But after the song was banned, the students who were to sing it refused to sing any songs at this event.

Bill Wyatt, associate director of communications at the school, explained the decision to muzzle the free speech of these students. "JMU is a public university, so because it was a school-sponsored event, the song choice needed to be secular." He is wrong. The following events have taken place at other Virginia public institutions:

*George Mason University:* On November 29, "A Chanticleer Christmas" concert was held that featured "ancient hymns" and "venerated sacred music." On Dec. 18, the Vienna Boys Choir offered a "Christmas in Vienna" concert that included "sacred hymns."

*Virginia Military Institute:* On Dec. 8, it held an event, "Carols in the Courtyard" that included, "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

*Radford University:* On Oct. 23, the Madrigal Singers performed "Hail Mary."

*University of Mary Washington:* On Dec. 4 and 5, a faculty member sang "Ave Maria" and "O Holy Night" at the Holiday Pops Concert. No one was arrested.

Censoring Christmas is obscene, but lying about it is even worse. There is no law banning religious songs from being sung at public schools.

Officials at JMU heard that message loud and clear after a number of print, broadcast and online media outlets picked up our news release and publicized the school's offensive conduct.