

Advertisers at War

- Drew Faria

TV viewers, brace yourselves. TVs nationwide are on the verge of exploding with the annual holiday ads. Companies have hit that point in which they feverishly sell us as much inventory as possible. All of us often get swept away in a tsunami of commercialization, and we wash up in stores buying numerous gifts for others and ourselves. It becomes second nature as it happens every year. Of course, gifts for people over the holidays are part of our culture. Imagine being that awkward guy on Christmas during present-opening time who does not have anything to give? The point is we need to be aware that plenty of people around us cannot afford to shop like us.

Every year, our church has a tree from which people can choose a paper ornament. The ornament lists what a specific kid wants for Christmas whose family cannot afford it. Just the other day, my family and I went shopping for some of these people. One of them wanted an iPod, another wanted Barbies, typical 21st century kid stuff. Another family asked for some storybooks for a three year-old. This means that there is a family out there who does not have maybe \$20 to buy some books for their child for one special occasion. Wow. It makes me wonder how different their holidays are from mine. In comparison, we can spend hundreds, if not more, during the holiday season.

This is not to say that we should feel guilty every time we drool at the newest tablet, line of clothing, or smartphone that gloriously reveals itself upon our TV screens. Presents show how much you care about someone, and we all deserve a personal treat, too! We just need to make sure that we consider the fact that there are those who cannot celebrate the holidays in the same way. Companies constantly stray our attention away from this and focus it on the things that those in our lives might enjoy for the holidays. We are their markets, not those who cannot pay for their goods. We need to see through this war between advertisers for our money. For some of us, we might do a little more than just think about the poor. Maybe we can donate a coat or toy this season, or tip the Salvation Army guy with the bell. He has a more important reason to stand there than ringing bells in the cold!