

THE JEWISH CASE FOR “MERRY CHRISTMAS”

By Don Feder

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You may find the title confusing. After all, religious Jews don't celebrate Christmas. So why should a Jew care if a store clerk says “Merry Christmas”? Why should the public disappearance of Christmas matter to the Jewish people?

Patience. All will be explained in due course.

In the meantime, 'tis the season to be politically correct – a coast-to-coast harkening-free zone and the tyranny of hyper-sensitivity.

The increasingly successful effort to purge Christmas from our culture (correctly called the War on Christmas) proceeds apace – municipal Christmas trees are re-christened (no pun intended) “holiday trees,” schools ban Christmas decorations and the singing of Christmas carols during holiday programs. Christmas – excuse me -- *holiday* parades are excluding Santa Claus, and, everywhere, stores (which derive 20% of their annual revenue from *Christmas* sales) are in Grinch overdrive.

This year, Lowe's employees are permitted to say “Merry Christmas,” but only in response to a customer initiating the greeting. On its website, Barnes & Noble offers a “Gift Guide” which includes “Holiday gift baskets,” “holiday sleds” and “holiday delivery.” FYI, the “holiday” celebrated by 95% of the American people at this time of the year is called Christmas.

The Best Buy website offers “unique gifts for the season.” According to Liberty Counsel (a Christian legal action group), a

company spokesman claims the use of the word “Christmas” is disrespectful.

Disrespectful to who? The 5% of the American people who don't celebrate Christmas? But how many of them actually care? (For years, people said “Merry Christmas” to me, without inflicting severe emotional harm.) Would it be *disrespectful* for a clerk in Tel Aviv to wish someone a “Happy Hanukkah”?

(FYI, according to a Rasmussen poll (conducted November 18-19), 69% of Americans prefer “Merry Christmas” to the generic “happy holidays” (favored by 23% -- doubtless all card-carrying members of the ACLU.)

Eddie Bauer's customer service department doesn't acknowledge Christmas because, says a spokesman, the retailer doesn't “want to offend Jews, those who celebrate Kwanza, and those who have no religious preference.” And what about the Christians whose holiday is intentionally ignored? The retail giant isn't overly concerned about offending them.

Earlier this year, the no-religious-preference crowd (who nonetheless are into decking the halls) rejoiced when K-Mart again started selling “Holiday trees” – under which “holiday presents” could be placed and around which the family could gather on holiday eve to sing “um-um-um, um-um, um-um-um um” – until that too is banned as somehow disrespectful. Sadly for them, under consumer pressure, the store just did an about-face.

The refusal of retailers to wish 95% of the American people a “Merry Christmas,” is but a seasonal manifestation of the secularist jihad.

But the unholy war is most apparent at this time of the year:

- The City of Chicago pressured organizers of the annual Cristkindlmarket (literally: Christ child market) to drop New Line Cinema as a co-sponsor. The studio was going to show clips from its just-released film “The Nativity Story,” at its booth. A city official determined it would be terribly “insensitive to the many people of the many faiths who come to enjoy the market for its good and unique gifts” to encounter a booth showing clips from a movie about Jesus – at a *Christmas fair*. Might spoil their shopping experience, don’t you know. (And if someone went to a Hanukah party they might – oh no! – see a menorah. And wouldn’t that be just too awful for words.) By the by, Chicago always gives a warm municipal welcome to the annual Gay Pride Week (including “Mr. Leather”). Again, religious people apparently have no sensibilities.
- The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to review a lower court ruling that New York public schools can refuse to display crèches at Christmas, while putting up menorahs at Hanukah and crescents at Ramadan. Celebrating minority religions is cool, multicultural and sensitive. Acknowledging the religion of the overwhelming majority is callous, not inclusive – hence, un-cool.
- There’s an ongoing game of pc one-upsmanship. Employee “holiday parties” are no longer permitted at the University of Colorado. (Christmas parties were ditched last year.) Obsessive administrators decided that during a holiday party someone might be thinking about that holiday which is the focus of the season. Henceforth, the school will have “staff appreciation parties” or “good-will functions” -- as long as the good will referenced in no way relates to (you, know) *peace on earth, good will toward men*.

The War on Christmas is one front in the War on Christianity -- which itself is part of the war on religion and religious-based values.

The same ideologues who want to take Christmas out of Christmas, also want to take God out of the Pledge of Allegiance, “In God We Trust” off our currency and bibles out of presidential inaugurations. They want to pretend that the Ten Commandments had no more to do with the founding of this country than the Koran, The Humanist Manifesto II or “The Earth In Balance.”

The foregoing should matter to Jews principally for two reasons:

The Jewish mission is to spread God-based morality –

This has been true since the time of Abraham. God expects Jews to spread knowledge of Him and his commandments. We are told to stand against a morality of convenience. (We are expected not to change with the times, but to change the times – as we did in the ancient Near East.) Judaism was the first religion to embrace a universal moral code – one for all people, at all times, in all places.

Just as in the 19th century most American Jews opposed slavery and in the early 20th. century, Jewish reformers supported child-labor laws, today, morality-from-Sinai requires us to support the family and oppose sexual license and the destruction of innocent human life (including abortion-on-demand, cloning to kill and euthanasia).

Serious Christians – whose morality comes from our Bible – recognize the same ethical injunctions. That’s why they’re under relentless attack by the cultural elite. The secular left wants to extinguish God-based morality. The only way to do that is to drive

Christianity underground. Hence, the War on Christianity. Hence, the War on Christmas.

How well the left has done its work of deconstructing marriage, the American family and traditional morality may be seen in three statistics. In the 1930s, married couples comprised 84% all households. Today, the figure is just under 50%. Since 2000, the number of cohabitating couples increased by 14%.

That's why, Jews -- as Jews -- must oppose revisionist efforts to deny our nation's Christian heritage, must stand against the drive to decouple our laws from Judeo-Christian ethics and must counter attacks on public expressions of the religion of most Americans – Christianity.

Jews are safer in a Christian America than in a secular America.

Look at the fate of Jews in post-Christian Europe.

Stephen Steinlight, former director of the U.S. Holocaust Museum, says there are an average of 12 assaults a day on Parisian Jews – comparable to Nazi attacks on Jews in the dying days of the Weimar Republic. In recent years, synagogues, Jewish day schools and kosher restaurants have been targeted by Europeans of the jihad persuasion.

In a commentary in the October 17th Jerusalem Post, David Meyer (a French-born rabbi serving a synagogue in Brussels) writes: “I am frightened not just by the anti-Semitism (*resurgent in Europe*) but by the collective European response of indifference and appeasement. Today, Europe worships compromise. It is ‘fanatical’ in its non-violence. It is a Europe that, in the face of Islamist fanaticism, is ready to stay silent.”

Nature abhors a spiritual vacuum. In a Europe where churches are empty, mosques are filling and new ones are being built every day.

Muslims are having children, while child-like Europeans embrace childless lifestyles. If Christianity fails on the Continent, it won't be replaced by secular nothingness, but by a creed that both Jews and Christians should fear.

It's no surprise that the nation with the highest church attendance in the industrialized world (30% to 40%) is the strongest in its support for Israel. In general, support for Israel in the U.S. can be predicted by frequency of church attendance, with Evangelicals, -- whose faith is deep-rooted -- most devoted to the Jewish state.

And, please don't tell me about the Spanish Inquisition and the expulsions of 1492. That was half a millennium ago. The principal threats to Jews in the mid-20th century were creeds which sought to replace God with secular ideologies, based on evolutionary race theory or a maniacal class consciousness.

While Christmas isn't part of my religion, I'm all for public acknowledgements of a religious holiday celebrated by 95% of the American people.

What's the alternative -- an America dominated by the twisted theories of Planned Parenthood, the ACLU, Michael Moore and George Clooney? Instead of the red and green of Christmas, how about an America where chador black is the dominant color?

So, what do you prefer to saying "Merry Christmas"? "Workers of the world unite?" Or "Allah Akbar"?

The commentary originally appeared at GrassTopsUSA.com