



# JUST SAY MERRY CHRISTMAS

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The change from wishing fellow Americans “Merry Christmas” to wishing them “Happy Holidays” is a very significant development.

Proponents of “Happy Holidays” argue it’s no big deal - proponents of “Merry Christmas” are making a mountain out of a molehill.

But the “Happy Holidays” advocates want it both ways. They dismiss opponents as hysterical; but at the same time, in addition to replacing “Merry Christmas” with “Happy Holidays,” they have relentlessly pushed to replace “Christmas vacation” with “winter vacation” and “Christmas party” with “Holiday Party.”

So, then, which is it? Is all this elimination of the word “Christmas” important or not?

The answer is obvious. It’s very important. That’s why so much effort is devoted to substituting other words for “Christmas.” And these efforts have been extraordinarily successful. In place of the universal “Merry Christmas” of my youth, in recent decades I have been wished “Happy Holidays” by every waiter and waitress in every restaurant I have dined; by everyone who welcomes me at any business; by my flight attendants and pilots; and by just about everyone else.

When I respond, “Thank you. Merry Christmas!” I often sense that I have actually created some tension. Many of those I wish “Merry Christmas” are probably relieved to hear someone who feels free to utter the “C” word, but all the sensitivity training they’ve had to undergo creates cognitive dissonance.

The opponents of “Merry Christmas” and other uses of the word “Christmas” know exactly what they’re doing. They’re disingenuous when they dismiss defenders of “Merry Christmas” as fabricating some “War on Christmas.” Of course it’s a war on Christmas, or, more precisely, a war on the religious nature of America. The left in America, like the left in Europe, wants to create a thoroughly secular society. Not a secular government – which is a desirable goal, and which, in any event, has always been the case in America – but a secular society.

Most people do not realize that the left believes in secularism as fervently as religious Jews and Christians believe in the Bible. That’s why “Merry Christmas” bothers secular activists. It’s a blatant reminder of just how religious America is – and always has been. So, here’s a prediction: Activists on the left will eventually seek to remove Christmas as a national holiday. Now, the left doesn’t announce that its agenda is to thoroughly secularize American and European societies. Instead, they offer the inclusiveness argument: that “Merry Christmas”

or “Christmas party” or “Christmas vacation” is not “inclusive.”

This inclusiveness argument plays on Americans’ highly developed sense of decency. But the argument is preposterous: Who, exactly, is being excluded when one wishes someone “Merry Christmas?” Non-Christians?

I’m a non-Christian. I’m a Jew. Christmas is not a religious holy day for me. But I’m an American, and Christmas is a national holiday in my country. It is, therefore, my holiday – though not my holy day – as much as it is for my fellow Americans who are Christian. That’s why it’s not surprising that it was an American Jew, Irving Berlin, who wrote “White Christmas,” one of America’s most popular Christmas songs. In fact, according to a Jewish musician writing in the New York Times, “Almost all the most popular Christmas songs were written by Jews.” Apparently all these American Jews felt quite included by Christmas!

By not wishing me a Merry Christmas, you are not being inclusive. You are excluding me from one of my nation’s national holidays.

But even if Christmas were not a national holiday, I would want pilots to wish their passengers “Merry Christmas,” companies to have Christmas parties, and schools to continue to have Christmas vacations. Just because I don’t personally celebrate Christmas, why would I want to drop the word “Christmas” when the holiday is celebrated by 90 percent of my fellow Americans?

It borders on the misanthropic, not to mention the mean-spirited, to want to deny nearly all of your fellow citizens the joy of having Christmas parties or being wished a “Merry Christmas.” The vast majority of Americans who celebrate Christmas, and who treat non-Christians so well, deserve better.

So, please say “Merry Christmas” and “Christmas party” and “Christmas vacation.” If you don’t, you’re not “inclusive.” You’re hurtful.

I’m Dennis Prager.