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'Christmas' worth fighting for

Mike Griffin, Guest Columnist

“Wannabe constitutional lawyers in local government offices all over the country are declaring unconstitutional normal and traditional Christmas representations such as Christmas trees, Santa Claus, treetop stars, wreaths, the singing of and listening to Christmas carols or Christmas instrumental music, attending a performance of Dickens's A Christmas Carol, the publication of the word 'Christmas' itself, and even the colors red and green!” (John Gibson, Fox News channel anchor and author of “The War on Christmas.”)

Who would have thought that we would see the day when even the mere mention of the phrase, “Merry Christmas” could create such a commotion as it does now? Not in my wildest dreams!

I have already seen it in Hartwell. Last year, while I was standing in a checkout line, an employee came up to me and said, “Happy Holiday!” I responded to him by asking, “What holiday is it?” His response was, “Well Š it's Christmas.” I said, “Then, why don't you just say 'Merry Christmas'?” With an embarrassed look he just smiled and said, “Well Š”

I suspect he had been told not to say “Merry Christmas.”

So much fear and trepidation exists about lawsuits and offending people that a simple “Merry Christmas” is not allowable anymore. In fact, in Illinois, the state government employees were forbidden from saying the words “Merry Christmas!” Many major retail stores have followed suit. Target not only bans the term “Merry Christmas” but no longer allows Salvation Army kettles in front of their stores.

It is even being reported that Lowe's Home Improvement store is now selling “Holiday Trees” rather than “Christmas Trees.” If they are holiday trees, then why don't they sell them on the 4th of July? I'll tell you why. Because they are Christmas trees!

Why do our schools take a winter break when they do? I'll tell you why, because it's Christmas! Schools and businesses know why people give gifts during this “winter break” - it's Christmas!

While I may observe Christmas for one reason and someone else may for another reason, it does not change why we have the holiday and why we buy presents. Historically, Christmas has always been about the birth of Christ.

It's amazing that even the Congress and the Supreme Court have acknowledged the legitimacy of our government celebrating a national holiday called "Christmas." And yet we still find government offices afraid to simply acknowledge the historical truth that this day represents the birth of Jesus Christ.

Can you see what is happening before our very eyes? Our government, our schools and now our businesses have become tainted with an anti-Christian bias. In Eugene, Ore., when a city manager was asked why he banned Christmas trees in their buildings he said, "Well, because they're Christian."

John Gibson, in a recent interview, noted that he thinks Christians are being singled out and unfairly treated today. Gibson, who makes no serious claim to Christianity, but through the year has attended church with Christians of different denominations, said, "I have been with people when they were having their religious services. There was nothing threatening about it. I had never been dragged off to a church in handcuffs by people Š And what struck me as odd was all this demonizing of people I knew did not deserve to be demonized."

Gibson goes on to say, "Look, the religious tradition in this country is, mainly, tolerance. And what Christians are asking today, which seems to me to be entirely reasonable, is that the same sense of tolerance that is extended to the religions that make up only 7 percent - that is, Islam, Wiccanism, Kwanzaa, Hinduism, Judaism - be extended to them, the people of the majority religion. What's the problem with that?"

The problem is that there exists a rising anti-Christian bias in our country. A bias that represents a minority of people in this country seeking to suppress what the majority of this country is in support of. Recent polls indicate that 96 percent of Americans celebrate Christmas as such. How can 4 percent suppress what 96 percent love to celebrate as an American tradition?

I believe Christmas is worth fighting for.

Merry Christmas!

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