KZGN News Talking Points Editorial

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By: Tom Wiknich

Can we say ‘Merry Christmas’ and Happy Hanukkah’ without offending anyone?

As I start this editorial, let me say this real clear Happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas!

Now I ask, was anyone offended when I said those greetings? While I don’t mind the currently politically correct phrase, ‘Happy Holidays,’ I prefer the old style traditional greeting phrase, ‘Merry Christmas.’ Being in my 60’s now, I was raised in northern Ohio in a very traditional household. I was taught to respect my elders, listen to the police, pull over if there are red lights flashing behind me, never touch a woman in anger, and always do what mom said, among other very specific rules I won’t get into now. I was also taught to greet everyone with a smile and respect. I was raised in the Lutheran church and currently attend our Saviors Lutheran church here in Ridgecrest. We were taught to respect everyone’s right to worship whatever religion they wanted. I’m not going to start preaching, but in our church we used the phrase, ‘Merry Christmas.’

To this day, I still use that phrase without even thinking about it. Sure, it is definitely a phrase celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. But it is also a standard seasonal greeting from one person to another. I also have Jewish friends that sometimes I mistakenly say, ‘Merry Christmas’ to. Not to offend, but it’s just habit. And you know what? They have never been offended by me using that greeting to them. They just smile and even say, ‘Merry Christmas’ back to me. However, if I already know they are Jewish, I do wish them, ‘Happy Hanukkah.’ And they say, ‘Merry Christmas’ to me. It’s all very easy and respectful. Even my Atheist friends are not offended when I wish them a Merry Christmas. They just smile and return the greeting. I have to think this is people being tolerant and friendly. No one is trying to disrespect anyone. Which is why the phrase happy holidays was invented. For those people that think I’m trying to inflict my beliefs on others, I say lighten up. Merry Christmas is just a friendly greeting. Sure, it has a specific meaning to Christians. But you don’t have to think we are preaching to you when we say it. We are being happy and friendly. There are even some businesses that won’t let their employees use the phrase, ‘Merry Christmas.’ They don’t want to offend any shoppers. Give me a break. Have people gotten so thin skinned that they can’t just let a person give them a happy greeting without being offended? Well, in my businesses I do not have any such instructions to my employees. I don’t make anyone use the phrase, or make anyone not use the phrase. My employees are free people. They can use the greeting or not. It makes no difference to me, as long as they are respectful of the customer. To those businesses that prohibit their employees from using the phrase, ‘Merry Christmas’ News flash!!!! I’m offended by your controlling your employees right to free speech.

Yes, I said free speech. The 1st amendment to the constitution guarantees our right to free speech. This applies to your employees, even on the job.

In conclusion, I am happy to inform you that I believe in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. I hope you share the same belief. So with that said, I say to you Merry Christmas!

Tell me what you think! I encourage your email comments. Whether you agree with me or not,

I’d like to read your comments. I may read some email comments on my next editorial. Or, if you have a suggestion of an issue you’d like me to discuss, email that to me as well. Please email them to [info@kzgn.net](mailto:INFO@KZGN.NET).

KZGN TV provides 3 TV channels for your viewing pleasure over the air and on Mediacom. Heartland TV, Tuff TV, and Corner Store. Highlighting local news, weather, sports, and hosting the new Ridgecrest Talk program Monday through Friday. At this time of the year, as president and CEO of Wiknich Broadcasting Corp and GUNS4US. On behalf of my co-owner and wife Shannon, and the entire staff of KZGN TV, Fritz, Reed, Tom, Keith, Shelly, Jolene, Joe, Lois, Al, Robert, and Paul. And also on behalf of the GUNS4USS crew, Shannon, Denise, Sean, Fred, Howard, David, and Courtney, I want to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

We all hope that your holiday is filled with family, friends, and joy. Our wishes also go out to all the military families. Thank you all for your service to our great nation. As a US army veteran, I salute your service. Freedom isn’t free. Merry Christmas and Happy N ew Year everyone. And God bless America.

This has been a KZGN Talking Points Editorial seen right here on KZGN TV on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Until next time, I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think!