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Happy Holidays v. Merry Christmas: A Politically Incorrect, Inclusive Perspective Merry Christmas, everyone!

Sorry about that – I meant Happy Holidays, Seasons Greetings, Happy Kwanzaa, Happy Hanukah, Happy everything! I didn't mean to offend anyone by adding the forbidden word for the holiday that 90% of Americans celebrate, including atheists and many Hindus.

Christmas has become an increasing secular tradition, with, of course, a heavy dose of commercialism. Retailers rake in between 20%-30% of their annual sales during the holiday season. Meanwhile, holiday advertisements abound on tv, radio and Internet, reminding the audience to spend as much as possible on their loved ones.

Yet, a lamentable breed of political correctness has long demanded that we pretend that the primary focus of such holiday shopping is not for Christmas. In the vagueness of 'Happy Holidays', the two other holidays of the season, Hanukah and Kwanzaa, are paid heed to, so as not to offend. But personally, I have never met any Jew, Muslim, Hindu or atheist who is offended by the 'Merry Christmas' greeting. I often see my secular Muslim and Jewish Facebook friends either wearing Christmas gear or wishing everyone Merry Christmas. My former Hindu colleague regularly celebrates Christmas with his family and my atheist friends do not see the 'Christ' in Christmas, just a secular holiday to celebrate with families and friends.

More importantly, the 'Happy Holidays' greeting does little to include minorities – as very few minority holidays are during the winter holiday season. Both of the two main

Muslim holidays, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al Adha, revolve around the lunar calendar and are at fluctuating points throughout the year. In 2019, none of the biggest Hindu holidays, including Holi, Maha Shivarati, Krishna Janmashtami, Onam or Diwali, fall in the American holiday season; nor do major Buddhist holidays, such as Wesak, Obon and Pavarana. Thus, the supposedly inclusive ‘Happy Holidays’ greeting only includes an additional 2.001% of the U.S. population – Jews who observe Hanukah and the 2.3% of African Americans who celebrate Kwanzaa – leaving all other minorities out to dry.

Additionally, the politicized ‘Happy Holidays’ greeting angers much of the majority, exacerbating the threat some feel that they are ‘losing the country’ and their relative privilege as the majority. If we truly want to embrace inclusivity and diversity surrounding holidays while not uselessly alarming the majority (save that for real reform), then we would bid our friends, colleagues and neighbors Eid Mubarak, Happy Holi and Shana Tova – as well as Merry Christmas – on the appropriate days. But, unfortunately, most Americans haven’t the slightest idea when Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim holidays are, while having only a faint inkling of Jewish holy days.

Furthermore, ‘Happy Holidays’ in lieu of ‘Merry Christmas’ helps create and/or support a certain stream of logic that sees any inclusive policies as negative, such as gay marriage, affirmative action or school busing. It helps solidify the bias of center and right-leaning Americans who view anything associated with progressivism as silly, panty-waste, emotion-laden, rather than a more accurate reading: supporting the full human rights of all Americans and immigrants, boosting the long stagnated wage and reducing the corporate stranglehold on government and everyday life – the two latter of which most Trump supporters would arguably embrace. In short, ‘Happy Holidays’ is a miniscule Band-Aid for a gaping wound of corporate rule, a country-wide opioid crisis and rampant xenophobia.

As has been often noted, even ‘Happy Holidays’ has a religious derivation, emerging from the Old English “haligdæg,” or “holy day.” While this greeting includes the only other holy day of the season, Hanukah, it actually discounts the secular Kwanzaa holiday and the fact that atheists, who constitute 10% of Americans, view no winter holidays as holy. If we really wanted to be politically correct, catering to touchy-feelie sensitivity rather than pursuing real change, we would ditch ‘Happy Holidays’ altogether!

In conclusion, perhaps Americans should move past the frivolity of caring so much of greetings and enjoy Christmas and other celebratory days, while starting to work towards

real change and honest inclusivity, rather than a phony 'Happy Holiday' Band-Aid that fruitlessly divides.