

Christian Groups Threaten “Holiday” Boycotts

Christian organizations across the country have begun campaigns to fight retailers who choose not to acknowledge Christmas.



[] As humanists and atheists continue launching anti-Christmas crusades worldwide Christians in the U.S. have decided to kick off campaigns challenging retailers and anyone else trying to remove Christ from the season.

Mathew Staver, founder of the Florida-based legal firm Liberty Counsel (LC), recently initiated “Friend or Foe,” an annual campaign that offers free legal services to anyone persecuted for public displays of Christmas.

As part of this year's initiative, LC is also boycotting stores that advertise Christmas products but exclude the word Christmas from its promotions.

“If a government entity censors Christmas in violation of the Constitution, then we will first seek to educate but, if necessary, we will litigate,” Staver said. “If retailers choose to profit from Christmas while pretending it does not exist, then we will patronize their competitors.”

LC's Web site includes a “Naughty or Nice” list that names names. Among the stores allegedly failing to embrace the word Christmas in their advertisements are Circuit City, The Gap and CVS.

Focus on the Family started a similar campaign called “I Stand for Christmas” in which Christians are urged to sign a petition thanking retailers for not “purging Christmas” references from advertisements and chiding retailers who do.

Stuart Shepard, digital media director for Focus on the Family, says that a boycott by Christians during the holiday season could greatly affect retailers bottom-line.

"Whose more likely to go through your holiday catalogues to buy your Christmas decorations, your Christmas cards, and your Christmas gifts," Shepard asked on his weekly blog: "Merry Tossmas."

Shepard added: "Someone in the more than 90 percent of people who say they celebrate Christmas? Or someone who claims to be offended by the very word?"

In their new campaign dubbed "Project Merry Christmas," the American Family Association (AFA) is also encouraging people to fight against a trend that supplants the "Merry Christmas" greeting with "Happy Holidays."

The family-action group has sold out of their buttons that read: "IT'S OK TO SAY MERRY CHRISTMAS."

AFA chairman Donald Wildmon says that in the midst of the barrage of persecution against Christmas there lies a great opportunity for Christians to highlight the true meaning of the season.

"Christians can take a stand and proclaim to our communities that Christmas is not just a winter holiday focused on materialism, but a holy day when we celebrate the birth of our Savior," he said. **-Felicia Mann**